



# Buckinghamshire Council

## Transport, Environment & Climate Change Select Committee

### Minutes

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE SELECT COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 20 JANUARY 2022 IN THE OCULUS, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL, GATEHOUSE ROAD, AYLESBURY HP19 8FF, COMMENCING AT 10.00 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 11.52 AM**

#### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

B Chapple OBE, K Ashman, P Brazier, M Caffrey, C Cornell, E Gemmell, S Guy, D King, A Poland-Goodyer, L Sullivan, M Walsh, W Whyte and A Wood

#### **OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE**

P Martin, P Strachan, G Badhan, R Barker, S Browning, K Dover, M Dickman, G Jones, L Leech, R Lumley and I Thompson

#### **Agenda Item**

##### **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors S Broadbent, R Carington and E Culverhouse. Apologies were also received from Will Gallagher (East West Rail Company).

##### **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor M Walsh declared a personal interest as an employee for Greg Smith MP.

Councillor W Whyte declared a personal interest as a part time employee for Greg Smith MP.

##### **3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2021 were confirmed as an accurate record subject to the inclusion that the Cabinet Member for Transport advised that the Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy would be published by the end of November 2021.

The Chairman updated Members that the Strategy had been delayed and that the Cabinet Member for Transport hoped it would be published by the end of January 2022.

##### **4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were none.

## 5 EAST WEST RAIL

The Chairman welcomed Mark Cuzner, Mark James (East West Rail Alliance) and Peter Hume (Network Rail) to the meeting and invited the Deputy Cabinet Member for Transport, Councillor Peter Martin, to introduce the item. The Deputy Cabinet Member highlighted that East West Rail would bring a station at Winslow which would benefit residents. East West Rail was one of two major infrastructure projects in Buckinghamshire, the other being HS2, and project crossovers had caused disruption and concerns for residents. The Council was working with East West Rail to mitigate the impact in the community and sought to develop the long-term benefits of the project.

In the presentation delivered by Mark Cuzner, Mark James and Peter Hume, the following points were noted:-

- East West Rail Alliance was a group made up of Laing O'Rourke, Atkins, Volker Rail and Network Rail. This group was focused on the delivery of the construction between Bicester and Bletchley. East West Rail Company oversaw the entire East West Rail programme.
- The Alliance appreciated the disruption the project caused residents and businesses and apologized for this impact.
- It was expected that most of the civil works would be completed by the third quarter 2022 which included earth, bridge and station work. This meant that traffic on the highway should diminish as materials would be delivered via rail.
- The Alliance's 'infrastructure ready' date of May 2024 was on track for delivery.
- The completion and handover of Jarvis Lane footbridge in September 2021 was the first of five new footbridges to be delivered.
- The public had been engaged through activities such as an engagement day at B3 compound (located near Winslow) where 240 people attended. Greg Smith MP had also visited the site in 2021. The Alliance intended to continue community engagement over the next two years.
- The Alliance was on target to deliver its commitment to a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain. This involved restoring habitats along the construction routes between Bicester, Bletchley and Milton Keynes.

The following points were raised during the Committee discussion:-

- The aim was for the service line to go live in December 2024. This was to allow 7-8 months of testing phases after the infrastructure ready date of May 2024.
- The use of diesel rolling stock would be a temporary situation whilst wider consultation took place on the line's power solutions however there was no anticipated end date for the usage of diesel trains. Net carbon was expected to be a part of a future solution. Consideration of overhead electrification of the Bicester – Bletchley route had been given during the feasibility stage of the project however Government felt this was unnecessary. The Alliance took measures to accommodate future overhead electrification measures such as rebuilding bridges to a height that would not impede retrofitting pylons.
- The timescale for the delivery of the 10% Biodiversity Net Gain would be circulated after the meeting. Arrangements to manage the site areas after 2024 also needed to be considered.

### **Action: The Alliance**

- Although the project intended to retain vegetation, trees had been removed as part of the works. Over 150,000 trees of differing maturity had been planted by the Alliance. The number of trees removed would be checked and circulated to the committee.

**Action: The Alliance**

- The Alliance had no requirement to measure its carbon emissions but had commenced work to ascertain this. Details on this would be circulated.

**Action: The Alliance**

- Members were concerned that the Aylesbury link to East West Rail would not take place as the link would support connectivity and sustainable transport whilst relieving pressures on the highways. It was noted that housing allocation numbers had also taken the existence of the link into account. The Alliance acknowledged the benefits of the link and continued operating to keep this option available until a decision was made by the Department for Transport. The Council's last correspondence on this was in June 2021 and the Chairman encouraged all organisations in support of the Aylesbury link to work together in lobbying Government for its inclusion in the project.
- Highways work was split into three categories:
  1. New highways on overbridges.
  2. Mitigation of construction traffic (e.g. through junction modification and passing bays).
  3. Improvements and repairs to the existing roads due to construction.There were examples where previous repair work needed to be re-visited by the Alliance.
- Wheel washing facilities were located at each site which was supplemented by wheel cleaning. Complaints of mud on the road had been due to some suppliers not following the washing procedure in place when leaving the site combined by poor weather conditions. The Alliance was responsible for this and sought to improve performance by responding to complaints more quickly.
- Compound A3 at Marsh Gibbon was now largely demobilised as the structural work had been completed. The wheel washing station had been decommissioned however manual wheel washing still took place along with an hourly sweep and brush route.
- The two marshals recruited by the Council monitored impacts of the project so that issues could be resolved as soon as possible. The Alliance had traffic ambassadors who monitored driver behaviour and road conditions, and reported preventative and/or recovery work.
- All train stations would be compliant in accessibility criteria.

The Chairman thanked the representatives from East West Rail for their attendance and welcomed a future update on the project next year.

## **6 INTEGRATED HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRE CONTRACT**

The Chairman welcomed the Cabinet Member for Environment & Climate Change and invited him to introduce the item. The new HRC contract arrangements had been agreed by Cabinet in December 2021 and the Cabinet Member outlined key points of the contract which included:-

- FCC Waste Service Ltd had been awarded the contract from 1 April 2022. This contract would deliver a very similar service to the one currently in place and the existing hours would remain.
- It was a five-year contract with an option to extend a further five years at mutual agreement. The Net Present Cost (NPC) over five years was £15m and the potential NPC over ten years was £28.5m
- The existing HRC sites had over one million visits spread across nine sites and over 60,000 tonnes of waste was collected annually.
- The contract aimed to reuse, recycle or compost 68% of all waste received and aspired to stretch this to 73%.
- Consideration was being given to a new site in Buckingham as the current site could not

be extended to meet demand.

- FCC would produce a Community Stakeholder Liaison Plan to be agreed by the Council by 31 May 2022.

The following points were made during the Committee's discussion:-

- The targets for reuse, recycle or compost reflected Government legislation and the council's current rate was 67%. Extending the target to 73% would require MTFP investment to move further materials from residual waste into recycling streams (e.g. polystyrene).
- Around 18% went to the Energy from Waste Site, Greatmoor, which generated residential electricity.
- There would be financial implications if the operating hours at sites changed, and the contract took into account potential changes at Buckingham. It was too premature to provide dates for changes in the north of Buckinghamshire however updates would be communicated to the Council.
- The contract bidding process did have an environmental weighting and the bidders were subject to a carbon assessment metric. Any changes in outlets between the bid submission and the contract commencement were now being considered. Outlets had the potential to shift during the life of the contract which would require re-assessment and adaption; the new contract allowed for this. A public version of this document would be available in future.
- It was noted by Members that FCC was currently providing a good service particularly during the pandemic where services had been available to residents as normal.
- Chesham's HRC was unable to recycle tins and plastic which was due to legacy district council arrangements. Buckinghamshire Council was harmonizing its arrangements to deliver the same service at each HRC site so that there was no gap in recycling provision. The Cabinet Member hoped this would be delivered over the coming months.
- The Cabinet Member acknowledged that clear, simple communication with residents on recycling was important.
- Income generated from the reuse shops was a model commonly used by other local authorities. The Council provided the items for reuse and received 25% of the income. The shop in High Heavens was no longer fit for purpose and required replacement with the cost split between FCC and the Council.
- The Bledlow HRC site was progressing through the council's decision-making process.
- Cross-boundary arrangements on household recycling existed between Buckinghamshire, Slough and Milton Keynes. Income received from Slough Borough Council was reinvested into Burnham and Langley. The Cabinet Member was open-minded about potential future arrangements, including one Member's example of a monthly 'amnesty day' in Hertfordshire, however costs would need to be considered.
- Containers could be refurbished for 25% of the cost of a new container and could be maintained thereafter for up to eight years. Their condition would be monitored during the contract.

The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member for outlining the new HRC contract and commended the work of the officers.

## **7 WORK PROGRAMME**

The Select Committee received a report noting the upcoming work programme for the Committee.

**8 SCOPING DOCUMENT FOR RAPID REVIEW - POLLUTION IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE'S RIVERS AND CHALK STREAMS**

The Committee received a scoping document to carry out a rapid review on pollution in Buckinghamshire's rivers and chalk streams. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman had carefully considered the scope given that the issue was not a direct responsibility of the Council however it was an issue that the Select Committee took seriously.

The review would be chaired by Councillor R Carington. The group would have no more than 5-6 Members and the Chairman asked Members to write to him if they were interested in being on the review group. It was hoped that there would be a geographical spread of Members across the county.

RESOLVED –

That the rapid review scope document be agreed.

**9 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Thursday 10 March at 10am.